

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates.

I am writing to express that I am deeply troubled by the FCC's current push to roll back the few remaining rules that limit consolidation of media outlets. As this trend accelerates, so also does the decline in the quality of this nation's media. A critical, suspicious, non-conflicted, and diverse group of news producers are absolutely essential to the health of this, or any, democracy. The FCC appears to have transposed its primary mission. Our nation's media outlets must be managed in the public interest. Our public interests should not be managed for the benefit of the nation's media outlets.

Contrary to the mantra of corporate executives, capitalism is not an end in itself. Capitalism is a tool for bringing about innovation and, ultimately, benefit to our society. The executives are absolutely wrong • Capitalism cannot maintain itself. As our ancestors learned in the 1890s, an unregulated capitalist system quickly moves toward a condition of monopolies and trusts • thereby destroying the capitalist system. Government regulation is the only tool that can preserve the benefits of capitalism and prevent it from causing harm to our society. Unfortunately, the FCC, along with this administration in general, appears determined to eliminate the regulations that prevent capitalism's slide into monopoly and stagnation. I urge you to fight for the health of this democracy by not allowing the FCC to participate in the wholesale destruction of regulations necessary for the preservation of the competition and innovation spurned by capitalism.

The quality of our news media is harmed by consolidation. When congress passed its accounting reform act earlier this year it, amazingly, failed to address the issue of stock option expensing. The legislation passed has become all but useless because it fails to address the cause of the recent corporate scandals. If Americans know how much an executive stands to gain by fraudulently inflating stock prices, they can gauge the risk of a stock. The executives of America's corporations lobbied hard to prevent the expensing of stock options because of this. Corporate media all but ignored these events because it is operated by the very group of people who stand to gain by continuing fraudulent practices. Corporate media fails our society because it fails to honestly and objectively cover issues that affect the executives in power. The FCC is naive to assume that these executives will hold altruism above their bottom line. Only a highly diverse group of media outlets, under!

the strict scrutiny of the FCC,
with varying customer bases, governance systems and values can effectively police the existing and potential dangers of the corporate machinery. The likelihood that at least one of our media outlets will provide unbiased reporting on any issue increases every time the FCC increases the number of media outlets sharing the market. The FCC must reverse its current trend.

CNN had its highest ratings of the year during its coverage of the DC sniper attacks. The actual news about these events was hardly sufficient to fill the pervasive 24-hour coverage this media outlet devoted to this item. CNN resorted to speculation to fill the balance of the time. This coverage was so saturating that, indeed, the behavior of the snipers at times appeared to be in response to the speculation. While tragic, only a fool would argue that the overwhelming coverage of these events helped anyone understand the world better. In fact, the big media obsession with fear-provoking events at the expense of all others distorts people's perceptions of the world in which they live. The public's

worldview is skewed because we believe that, since these events are covered more frequently, they must be happening more often. The reality is that violent crime is declining • but no rational person would be able to discern that from corporate media coverage. The public is de!

nied useful information because

the major media producers have found that people will view more advertisements if they are frightened by the stories they see in between them. Corporate media places profit ahead of its responsibility to provide accurate and proportionate reporting of world events. This is a clear example of a situation in which capitalism does not benefit our society. The FCC is recklessly pursuing a perverted form of capitalism that will result in monopoly and stagnation. This is unethical, this shows contempt for our democracy, and this is un-American. A healthy democracy and a healthy, productive society are the costs we will pay for allowing the FCC to surrender its control of the machinery for free speech to corporations.